DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 140 887 JC 770 231

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TITLE Developing Learning Objectives for a Model Course to Prepare Adults for the Assessment of Prior, Non-Sponsored Learning by Portfolio Evaluation.
PUB DATE 7 Jun 77
NOTE 48p.; Ed.D. Practicum, Nova University ; Appendix C may be marginally legible due to small print of the original document

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.83 HC-$2.06 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Adult Students; Affective Objectives; Behavioral Objectives; Cognitive Objectives; Community Colleges; *Course Objectives; Courses; *Evaluation Needs; *Junior Colleges; Learning Experience; *Student Evaluation; *Student Experience
IDENTIFIERS *Experiential Learning; Prior Knowledge

ABSTRACT

A study was conducted in order to develop a systematic method for the evaluation of students' prior, non-sponsored learning for the award of college credit at Blackhawk College (Illinois). It was determined that a course designed to prepare the student for assessment of prior learning was the best way for the institution to provide assistance to the student in developing a portfolio for evaluation. A survey of institutions offering similar courses elsewhere was made and pertinent literature was reviewed in order to identify appropriate means and objectives for an assessment preparation course. Summaries of the specific types of learning usually included in such courses were then prepared, organized by means of Bloom's Taxonomy, and were translated into learning objectives for both the affective and cognitive domain. It was recommended that Blackhawk College implement the proposed assessment preparation course using the objectives delineated in this study. (JDS)

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DEVELOPING LEARNING OBJECTIVES FOR A MODEL COURSE TO PREPARE ADULTS FOR THE ASSESSMENT OF PRIOR, NON-SPONSORED LEARNING BY PORTFOLIO EVALUATION

by
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BEST COPY AVAILABLE

A PRACTICUM PRESENTED TO NOVA UNIVERSITY IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

NOVA UNIVERSITY

June 7, 1977

JC 770 331

ABSTRACT

TITLE: Developing Learning Objectives for a Model Course To Prepare Adults for the Assessment of Prior, Non-Sponsored Learning by Portfolio Evaluation

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Since 1972, Black Hawk College, Moline, Illinois, has had a commitment to assess students' prior, non-sponsored learning. Procedures to do so have included use of the College Level Examination Program (CLEP), The Guide, local proficiency examinations, and the evaluation of a portfolio compiled by the student. However, such assessment, especially that involving portfolio evaluation, has caused frustration and difficulty among students and faculty alike because no formal assistance in portfolio construction is provided. This study determined that the best way to provide such assistance was through the development of a formal course to prepare the student for the assessment of prior, non-sponsored learning. It began developmental work for such a course by a survey of the learning objectives and activities of similar courses elsewhere, by an analysis of portfolio requirements at other institutions, by an analysis of the requirements suggested by CAEL handbooks, and, because the course would be intended primarily for adults, by a consideration of the adult learning process. As a result of this survey and analysis, the study recommended specific types of learning for the proposed course organized by means of Bloom's Taxonomy, learning objectives stated following recommendations by Mager, and a list of the learning problems and preferences of adult students. It recommended that a college-credit course be developed based upon these learning objectives and reflecting those adult learning problems and preferences.

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CHAPTER I: Introduction

In 1972, the Black Hawk College board of trustees approved a policy statement committing the college to efforts to assess students' prior, non-sponsored learning. Shortly thereafter, the college became a College Level Examination Program (CLEP) open testing center and joined the Cooperative Assessment of Experiential Learning (CAEL) assembly. Although credit earned by the assessment of prior, non-sponsored learning may be applied to all degree programs, it is especially applicable to the college's associate in liberal studies degree, a contract degree for adults.

Since 1972, Black Hawk College has employed the usual methods to assess prior, non-sponsored learning. Procedures using CLEP are well-established and seem to work well. To a certain extent, the college has also used indices that equate certain types of experience and academic credit, such as The Guide, a CASE publication which deals with military experience; but most credit earned in this way has been applied to the associate in liberal studies degree because that degree program includes fewer restrictions on the validation of prior, non-sponsored learning. The college has also recognized some prior learning by means of portfolio examination or the use of local proficiency examinations. In all cases, credit is granted only for learning paralleling an existing college course or academic discipline area.

At Black Hawk College, perhaps the method that has caused the most frustration and difficulty among students and faculty alike has been that which involves the evaluation of a portfolio. Because students are provided no formal assistance in the compilation of the portfolio, usually faculty are confronted with students presenting a jumbled collection of raw materials instead of a portfolio or with those who do not even understand how to begin to assemble such a collection. As a result, faculty grow impatient, and many students quickly give up their efforts to gain credit for prior, non-sponsored learning. At a time when the college is actively recruiting new adult students, many with previous experiential learning, it is important to develop procedures to serve them better in all ways, including in the assessment process.

Most experts on the assessment of prior, non-sponsored learning insist that an institution has a responsibility to offer students assistance in preparing for assessment. Very often this assistance is in the form of a course or workshop that instructs students in how to determine and document their competencies. The work of this practicum takes the first step toward the development of such a course for Black Hawk College by identifying the learning objectives that it should have. It does so by surveying the content and methods of formal classes and of seminars or workshops elsewhere, by the study of manuals and guides prepared by CAEL, by considering characteristics unique to the process of experiential

learning, and by identifying those learning processes and problems unique to adults.

CHAPTER II: Background and Significance

The viability of "experiential learning" or "life experience credit" is recognized in the adage, "Experience is the best teacher." Up until this decade, the possibility of such learning was typically provided within postsecondary education through independent study or work experience projects that were planned and executed by the student under the supervision of a faculty member and that ordinarily served as extensions of or applications of classroom learning. Such experiential learning is, therefore, sponsored in that it results from prior planning and is monitored and evaluated while in progress by a faculty member. In this decade, however, efforts to accommodate adult learners in postsecondary education have resulted in the recognition that such students may have achieved college-level learning and skills in prior life experiences and that, appropriately, this prior learning should be assessed and equated to college-sponsored learning. Such experiential learning is non-sponsored in that the learning activities have not been planned or executed under the supervision of a faculty member.

Volumes of published and unpublished recent information are available on the assessment of prior, non-sponsored learning. This review of the literature concentrated on those areas most critical to the work of this practicum: the rationale for the assessment of prior, non-sponsored learning; the methods ordinarily used in such assessment; the ordinary procedures for assessment by portfolio examination; and learning theories applicable to the process.

The immediate interest in experiential learning can be traced to the work of the Commission on Non-Traditional Study. In Diversity by Design, its official report, the commission recommended, "New devices and techniques should be perfected to measure the outcomes of many types of non-traditional study and to assess the educative effect of work experience and community service."[1] This report was published in 1973; in the same year the Cooperative Assessment of Experiential Learning [CAEL] assembly was organized as a direct response to the need to develop assessment and credentialing procedures.

The rationale for the Commission on Non-Traditional Study's recommendation and for the work of CAEL was a recognition that our existing practices do not meet our present knowledge of learning processes and do not deal equitably with adults returning to postsecondary education after considerable experience in work or life. Cyril Houle traces the tradition of experiential learning to medieval society, which offered four general routes to knowledge: the university that provided for learning through books and lectures; the apprentice program of the guilds that was based upon experiential learning; the chivalric system of education that was competency-based and, again, experiential in method; and the independent study programs undertaken in monasteries, courts, and

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[1]Commission on Non-Traditional Study, Diversity by Design [San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1975], p. 125.

private libraries.[1] Of course, chivalry and monastery fairly much passed out of existence with the Renaissance, and, during the rise of industrialization, the craft system gave way. But the university survived; in fact, by the nineteenth century, its methods came to dominate education. It was John Stuart Mill who, in 1867, eloquently called for a return to experiential learning and for its harmonious combination with formal instruction in the liberal arts curriculum.[2] The same renewed belief in the need for experiential learning was accepted in this country as well. The Morrill Act recognized the need for instruction in such practical subjects as mechanics and agriculture; laboratory science became a traditional part of the curriculum; and clinical training became firmly established.[3] Thus, modern American postsecondary education provides amply for sponsored experiential learning.

However, Houle delineates four types of individuals who are not well-served by this system: those who gain experience before theory, those who prefer to be independent learners, those who want "guided but personalized programs of study," and those adults who wish to gather together all types of previous learning as the basis for additional study leading to a degree."[4] Smith sees four factors

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[1]Cyril O. Houle, "Deep Traditions of Experiential Learning," in Morris T. Keeton and Associates, Experiential Learning: Rationale, Characteristics, and Assessment(San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1976), pp. 21-25.

[2]Ibid., pp. 26-27.

[3]Ibid., pp. 28-30.

[4]Ibid., p. 31.

that now result in the accommodation of such students in post-secondary education by the assessment and crediting of prior, non-sponsored learning: a realization that we have formerly made too sharp a distinction between life and learning; the expansion of subjects taught, especially in the community college's offering of occupational and paraprofessional courses; the recognition in dealing with newly-recruited adult students that some of their life activities resemble in-college activities; and external pressures, both legal and social, to recognize by academic credentials learning that has occurred any place, especially if a college degree is going to be a requirement for employment.[1] Meyer notes two other changes that also serve to foster a new interest in experiential learning and an interest in crediting prior learning of this type. First of all, in all parts of education, learning is replacing teaching as the center of focus--demonstrated by the widespread use of individualized instruction. As a result, educators have become more concerned with what has been learned than with where or how it has been learned. Second, learning is coming to be viewed as a lifelong activity.[2] Thus, there is clear rationale for crediting and a demonstrated need to credit prior, non-sponsored learning.

As has been noted above, postsecondary education generally assesses prior, non-sponsored learning in three ways: by the use

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[1]Virginia B. Smith, "Foreword," in Keeton and Associates, p. xi.

[2]Peter Meyer, Awarding College Credit for Non-College Learning (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1976), p. 5.

of national testing programs, such as CLEP; by the means of indices that equate experience and academic credit, such as The Guide; and by other methods currently being developed by CAEL.[1]

CAEL's report entitled Assessing Prior Learning provides a comprehensive listing and description of the methods available for assessment: product evaluation, or the assessment of student work like photographs, paintings, short stories, or news articles; interviews and oral examinations; simulations, including academic or management games to test problem-solving and decision-making abilities and role-playing to evaluate interpersonal skills; performance tests; essay examinations; objective paper-and-pencil tests, including CLEP; and self-assessment, including a job inventory checklist or an occupational history information blank.[2] Ordinarily, learning documented in these ways is assessed and credit is awarded on the basis of parallel courses offered by the institution, subject or discipline area, competencies, a holistic evaluation or the awarding of blanket non-specified credits, and the satisfaction of required degree competencies.[3]

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[1]David A. Trivett, Academic Credit for Prior Off-Campus Learning, U.S., Educational Resources Information Center, ERIC Document ED 105796, 1975, pp. 9-10.

[2]Joan Knapp, Assessing Prior Learning--A CAEL Handbook[Cooperative Assessment of Experiential Learning, 1977], pp. 35-45.

[3]Ibid., pp. 51-53.

In almost all cases, such assessment begins with the student's preparation of a portfolio. Forrest, Knapp, and Pendergrass define a portfolio as a "file or folder of accumulated information about a student's experiences and accomplishments that can be the vehicle for organizing and distilling raw experiences into a manageable form for assessment." Usually it includes a resumé of educational, employment, community, or volunteer experiences; an autobiographical narrative of some sort; a statement requesting specific credit for the learning documented; and a set of documents providing evidence of the learning.[2]

The above discussion of the rationale for and the usual process of assessing prior non-sponsored learning suggests a need for a basis in learning theory. Recent work by two learning theorists--Coleman and Knowles--has special applicability to the work of this practicum.

Coleman lists the following four basic steps in academic learning: [1] receiving information, [2] assimilating and organizing it so that a general principle is understood, [3] inferring a particular application from the general principle, and [4] actually applying the knowledge. The second step requires more than just memorization; the third implies some cognitive abilities to

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[1]Aubrey Forrest, Joan E. Knapp, and Judith Pendergrass, "Tools and Methods of Evaluation," in Morris T. Keeton and Associates, Experiential Learning: Rationale, Characteristics, and Assessment, pp. 51-53.

to see the general principle; and the fourth requires moving into the sphere of action. Not until the fourth step is reached can a person be said to have learned. Coleman then distinguishes experiential learning from academic learning. Its process is almost reversed: [1] the completion of an action and the noting of its effect; [2] an understanding of these effects so that if precisely the same circumstances reoccur, the learner can anticipate the results of an action; [3] understanding the general principle under which the particular action-result occurs or perceiving a connection between action and results in a wide range of circumstances, and [4] applying the action in an entirely new circumstance.[1]

There are clear advantages in experiential learning. Coleman explains that in academic learning ordinarily steps 3 and 4, or generalization and application, are the most difficult, for they require verbalization and the use of symbols. Such is especially true with the culturally disadvantaged because their disadvantage is usually in linguistic and verbal skills. Conversely, in experiential learning, such verbalization and use of symbols is not required. In fact, often it is a characteristic of such a learner that he cannot explain what he does; he can only do it. Experiential learning differs from academic learning in other ways as well.

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[1] James S. Coleman, "Differences Between Experiential and Classroom Learning," in Morris T. Keeton and Associates, Experiential Learning: Rationale, Characteristics, and Assessment, pp. 51-52.

Because action occurs at the beginning of learning, there is an intrinsic motivation to learn, to understand the action. Thus, in experiential learning, motivation is usually not a problem. In addition, Coleman notes that the retention rate for experiential learning is usually better than that for academic learning.[1]

Coleman also points out difficulties in experiential learning. It is very demanding in time and effort, and the progress to the third step--generalization of principle--is very difficult. It is for this reason that "postgame discussions" appear to be essential for experiential learning.[2]

Coleman concludes by noting two major advantages in experiential learning. Action provides motivation, and doing something leads to a sense of accomplishment and greater self-assurance.[3]

Coleman's discussion of learning theory is of significance to the work of this practicum. It suggests that experiential learners will need training in verbalizing their learning, in moving from performance to that generalization that is a part of learning. Meyer suggests other assistance that should be available to the experiential learner: help in feeling confident that his/her experiences have been of value, help in identifying those aspects of his/her experiences that have academic value,[4] and help

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[1]Coleman, pp. 55-58.

[2]Ibid., pp. 54-58.

[3]Ibid., pp. 59-60.

[4]Ibid., p. 27.

in achieving self-awareness and confidence in his/her abilities.[1]

In his Modern Practice of Adult Education, Malcolm Knowles delineates and analyzes those ways in which adult learners differ from children. In terms of self-concept, they have more self-direction, are more capable of self-diagnosis and self-evaluation, and think of themselves as producers or doers.[2] They believe that experience is of value and that they have a considerable investment in their own. Thus, they prefer active learning with an emphasis on practical application.[3] Their readiness to learn is determined not by phsycial or mental maturation, as is the case with children, but by their adult social role, which is an evolving one.[4] And, in their orientation to learning, they desire problems-centered learning, that which possesses immediacy.[5]

Knowles' work in describing the adult learner is of significance to the work of this practicum for three reasons. First of all, it suggests that, because they perceive their experience as valuable, adults can be expected to value their experiential learning. Thus, efforts in postsecondary education to attract adults

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[1]Coleman, p. 90.

[2]Malcolm S. Knowles, The Modern Practice of Adult Education [New York: Association Press, 1970], pp. 39-40.

[3]Ibid., pp. 44-45.

[4]Ibid., pp. 45-47.

[5]Ibid., p. 48.

as learners and to deal with them equitably must include the option for the assessment and crediting of college-level prior, non-sponsored learning. Second, because adults are capable of self-diagnosis and self-evaluation, Knowles' work suggests that they can succeed in identifying and documenting their prior learning. And, third, Knowles' suggestions of types of learning activities that adults prefer--especially active and problems-oriented learning, small group work, and a share in planning--offer direction in the writing of learning objectives for a course to prepare adults for the assessment of prior, non-sponsored learning.[1]

Most experts on the assessment of prior, non-sponsored learning insist that an institution has a responsibility to offer students assistance in preparing for assessment. Guidelines prepared by the New York State Education Department include the recommendation that there be formal assistance,[2] and Forrest and Associates suggest that workshops be available to help students.[3] However, at Black Hawk College any formal assistance that is available to a student is through the department or faculty member that he/she approaches to seek assessment. Thus, the student's chances of receiving assistance are severely limited by the following conditions: inavailability of faculty members at places and times

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[1]Knowles, pp. 52-53.

[2]"Guidelines for Awarding Academic Credit for Knowledge Gained from Work and Life Experiences," State Education Department, Albany, N.Y., October 15, 1975. [Mimeographed.]

[3]Forrest, Knapp, and Pendergrass, p. 177.

necessary to serve adult students, especially in the evenings and off-campus; faculty lack of knowledge of this method of assessment and lack of preparation to provide such assistance; faculty frustration because of the lack of adequate time to instruct students individually in the process of defining competencies and validating them in a portfolio; and faculty resistance to doing so because in relation to this effort, unlike other efforts, there is no formal recognition or remuneration. As a result, the process for assessing prior, non-sponsored learning at Black Hawk College is wasteful in many ways: too few students know of the option or know where to receive information concerning it; too many faculty members lack the time or competence to assist students; and, if faculty do assist students, help is ordinarily imprecise, unnecessarily time-consuming, and frustrating to all involved. To be sure, handbooks, such as those recently made available by CAEL, seeking to instruct the student, offer one means to improve the process,[1] but, because they do not easily adjust to the situations

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[1]John Duley and Sheila Gordon, College-Sponsored Experiential Learning--A CAEL Handbook(Princeton, N.J.: Educational Testing Service, 1977). Paul Breen, Thomas F. Donlon, and Urban Whitaker, Teaching and Assessing Interpersonal Competence--A CAEL Handbook (Princeton, N.J.: Educational Testing Service, 1977). Joan Knapp, Assessing Prior Learning--A CAEL Handbook(Princeton, N.J.:Educational Testing Service, 1977). Richard Reilly and Associates, Expert Assessment of Experiential Learning--A CAEL Handbook(Princeton, N.J.: Educational Testing Service, 1977). Amiel Sharon, Assessing Occupational Competences--A CAEL Handbook(Princeton, N.J.: Educational Testing Service, 1977). Aubrey Forrest, Assessing Prior Learning--A CAEL Student Guide(Princeton, N.J.: Educational Testing Service, 1977). Hadley Nesbitt, College-Sponsored Experiential Learning--A CAEL Student Guide(Princeton, N.J.: Educational Testing Service, 1977). Paul Breen, Thomas F. Donlon, and Urban Whitaker, Learning and Assessing Interpersonal Competence--A CAEL Student Guide(Princeton, N.J.: Educational Testing Service, 1977).

and regulations of individual colleges or students, they do not promise to improve the process significantly.

One of the alternatives available to improve the availability of information and assistance to the student is the development of a formal course to prepare students for assessment of prior, non-sponsored learning by means of portfolio compilation and validation. Reverend James A. Woods, S.J., of Boston University, has compiled a list of thirty-seven postsecondary institutions with such a course,[1] and both Trivett and Meyer recommend the procedure.[2] Additionally, sources stress that the student's compilation of a portfolio itself requires the development of specific competencies--reflecting upon learning, defining competencies, synthesizing learning from several experiences, documenting learning, and report-writing. Thus, it seems appropriate to provide instruction leading to these competencies and to recognize this instruction and learning by means of college credit. In a recent study of faculty attitude at Black Hawk College, the concept of such a course received limited support, and, recently, a faculty committee recommended a similar course to assist students in determining prior learning credit and in completing contracts for the college's associate in liberal studies degree.[3]

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[1]Eugene J. Kray, "Experiential Learning Assessment--A Source-book for Postsecondary Institutions" [unpublished and preliminary draft of a doctoral dissertation, Nova University, 1977] p. 119.

[2]Trivett, p. 60, and Meyer, p. 91.

[3]Mary A. Stevens, "A Strategy to Gain Faculty Acceptance of and Participation in the Granting of Credit for Prior, Non-Sponsored Learning at Black Hawk College" [unpublished practicum, Nova University, March 1977], p. 67.

As this review of the literature demonstrates, there is a clear rationale for the assessment of prior, non-sponsored learning; the assessment ordinarily begins with the student's compilation of a portfolio; and, because of the nature of the experiential learning process and the requirements of portfolio construction, students need assistance in preparation for assessment. Additionally, characteristics of experiential learning and the adult learner suggest both the appropriateness of recognizing such learning and approaches that best work with adults. And, finally, a survey of the current situation in relation to the preparation of a student for assessment at Black Hawk College suggests the need for a formal course to prepare students for assessment.

This practicum undertook a detailed study of those skills necessary for a student to be successful in assessment, of courses elsewhere designed to provide such skills, and of learning theory that relates to assessment and preparation for it. It did so in order to develop a set of learning objectives for such a course, a necessary first step in its development. Because this work required a knowledge of and application of the principles of learning theory, it related closely to the Learning Theory and Applications Module.

CHAPTER III: Procedures

1. A letter of inquiry was sent to each of the thirty-seven postsecondary institutions identified by Wood as having such a course or seminar to prepare students for portfolio assessment. A list of those institutions to whom letters were mailed is included in Appendix A. Responses to these letters were analyzed and a list of learning objectives included therein or suggested by learning activities described therein was compiled.
2. Recent CAEL handbooks were analyzed, and a list of learning objectives included therein or suggested by learning activities was compiled.
3. By a survey of pertinent literature, a list of learning problems and processes unique to adults was compiled. Because the proposed course is anticipated to serve adults, this list served as a guide to the development of learning objectives.
4. A list of learning objectives for the proposed course was developed and stated in behavioral terms. This list was consistent with those suggested by CAEL handbooks and found in similar courses elsewhere and reflected those learning processes and problems unique with adults.

CHAPTER IV: Results

Appendix B identifies those institutions from among the thirty-seven who responded to the letter of inquiry. Nine reported formal instruction to prepare students for assessment in classes, workshops and seminars; eleven reported no courses but sent material on the assessment programs used at their institutions; three responded that they had no program to assess prior, non-sponsored learning; and fourteen did not respond. In addition, information concerning such a course at California State College in Dominquez Hills and on the assessment process in Western Illinois University's Board of Governor's degree was available and was analyzed.

This analysis showed that at several of those institutions providing formal instruction, the course deals with more than instructing the student in identifying and documenting prior, non-sponsored learning. Ordinarily, these additional purposes include assisting the student in finalizing his degree contract or in improving his abilities as an independent, self-directed learner. In addition, although some courses have written course objectives, none have specific learning objectives stated in behavioral terms. Thus, the information received only suggested learning activities, general objectives, or content areas and did not provide specific learning objectives.

Generally, this information suggested that the preparation of students for assessment should have two primary objectives: teaching the student how to reflect upon his prior, non-sponsored

learning, including writing competency statements, and teaching the student how to communicate this learning. More specifically, students are sometimes made aware of those three levels of abstraction in learning identified by Meyer--mastery of knowledge, competence, or skill; the analysis of the learning gained; and the analysis and synthesis of discrete bodies of knowledge gained.[1] Then, students are sometimes asked to actually demonstrate their ability to analyze and synthesize prior mastery of knowledge, competence, or skill. Or they are sometimes provided CAEL's diagram of the construction of a competency statement [Appendix C] and then asked to so state their own prior learning. Or, in many courses, they are provided with specific instruction in the compilation of a portfolio.

To accomplish these learning objectives, generally students are provided learning activities that teach them how to do the following: write a job description for a job that they have held, prepare and/or complete a skills inventory, write an autobiography, participate in simulation tests and role-playing, collect documentation of their prior learning by securing testimony in their behalf, construct a portfolio, and find course parallels in a college catalog for their prior learning.

The content or factual information that the student receives in these courses varies, but typically it includes the following:

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[1]Meyer, p. 23.

the history of and rationale for experiential learning, the different levels of learning, and the characteristics of the adult learner.

Likewise, an analysis of CAEL handbooks listed in footnote on page 14 provides suggestions for general learning objectives, learning activities, skills to master, and course content. Once again, these handbooks suggest that students may be required to do more than document prior, non-sponsored learning through compilation of a portfolio; they may be required to determine future goals, to set priorities among them, and to relate prior learning to these goals--competencies that are especially important at institutions requiring that credited prior, non-sponsored learning be related to a student's future goals. Also, these handbooks provide exercises to assist the student in becoming a self-directed learner.[1]

Specific skills emphasized include requiring students to analyze case studies to determine prior learning, to write a structuredautobiography, to write a competency statement, to document prior experiential learning, to measure prior learning, and to compile a portfolio.

These handbooks suggest that students master the following factual information: the institutional policies relating to assessment, the steps in assessment, and those types or categories of learning that are assessed.

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[1] Joan Knapp, Assessing Prior Learning--A CAEL Handbook, p. 33.

Finally, a survey of recent literature dealing with the adult learning process was made and a list of learning problems and processes unique to adults was developed. Knowles' assumptions concerning the adult learner, summarized earlier in this paper, suggest that adults prefer to be active partners in learning, sharing in its planning, and being motivated by its goals.[1] They prefer self-diagnosis, self-evaluation, and self-directed learning.[2]

In a more recent work on adult learning, Knox summarizes a wide range of research on its unique processes and problems. He distinguishes between "fluid intelligence," or "the ability to perceive complex relations, engaged in short-term memory, form concepts, and engage in abstract reasoning,"[3] and "crystallized intelligence," or "the ability to perceive relations and to engage in formal reasoning and abstraction based on a familiarity with knowledge of the intellectual and cultural heritage of a society."[4] Knox cites experimental evidence that fluid intelligence gradually decreases and crystallized intelligence gradually increases as the individual ages.[5] In general, according to Knox, most forty- and fifty-year-olds can learn with the same ability as they did in their twenties, providing they can control the pace.[6] Just as Knowles

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[1] Knowles, p. 52.

[2] Ibid., pp. 44-47.

[3] Alan B. Knox, Adult Development and Learning (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1977), p. 419.

[4] Ibid., p. 420.

[5] Ibid., p. 421.

[6] Ibid., p. 422.

recommended adult learning activities that make use of prior experience, so Knox recommends those that show the relationship between present competence and new learning.[1] Knox cites much evidence that adult memory decreases and recommends that learning activities for adults present new information with aids to assist the learner in organizing it for recall and provide self-pacing, review, and summaries.[2] He also recommends an approach that provides a variety of instructional resources--including AV materials, experts, and peers--and accurate and ready feedback.[3]

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[1] Knox, p. 433.

[2] Ibid., p. 437.

[3] Ibid., p. 443.

CHAPTER V: Discussion, Implications, and Recommendations

Perhaps the most remarkable result of the survey and analysis of practices and recommendations relating to preparing the student for the assessment of prior, non-sponsored learning is the finding that such courses are ordinarily not developed at institutions granting credit by such an assessment. Additionally, it should be noted that this survey failed to identify specific learning objectives stated in behavioral terms for such a course. It did, however, demonstrate considerable similarity among existing courses, recommended procedures, and the procedures included in CAEL handbooks. Additionally, the review of the process of adult learning provided guidelines for the development of learning objectives for a course for adults.

Based upon these findings, it is possible to identify the types of learning usually included in such courses or suggested by the actual process of assessment elsewhere. The best way to organize and summarize these types of learning is by means of Bloom's Taxonomy,[1] a procedure that facilitates the writing of actual learning objectives for the proposed course. Therefore, the categories employed below are those suggested by Bloom and associates.

COGNITIVE DOMAIN

1.00 Knowledge

(1) The recall of the referents for the following words: competency, analyze, synthesize, reflect, non-sponsored, skill, knowledge, documentation, experiential learning,

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[1]Benjamin S. Bloom, et al., Taxonomy of Educational Objectives, volumes I and II(New York: David McKay Company, Inc., 1956 and 1964).

resumé, portfolio, simulation, role-playing, narrative, theory, history, concepts, principles, ideology, generalization, classification, system, methodology, processes.

[2] Knowledge of institutional policies relating to assessment, of the steps in the process of assessment, of basic trends in the history of experiential learning, of the characteristics of the different levels of learning, of the characteristics of the types or categories of learning, of the parts of a competency statement and the purpose of each part, of the parts and purposes of a job description, of the parts and purposes of a portfolio, of the parts and purposes of a skills inventory, of the organization and purposes of an autobiography, of the characteristics and purposes of types of documentation, of the criteria for the common methods of evaluation of prior, non-sponsored learning.

[3] Knowledge of the rationale for experiential learning.

2.00 Comprehension

[1] The ability to translate experiential learning into competency statements or job descriptions, the ability to translate a college catalog course description into less abstract phraseology, the ability to translate parts of a skills inventory into less abstract expression by the use of example, the ability to translate specific learning or performance illustrations into abstract statements of learning or performance.

[2] The ability to distinguish between valid and invalid assessments of prior, non-sponsored learning from written case studies; the ability to distinguish the major characteristics of a college course from a written catalog description; the ability to distinguish college-level learnin experience in a role-playing or simulation exercise; the ability to distinguish the major characteristics of a job from a written job description; the ability to distinguish activities resulting in experiential learning from an autobiography or resumé.

[3] The ability to match experiential learning and parallel college courses by the use of written documentation of experiential learning and the college catalog course descriptions; the ability to predict the results of the evaluation of prior, non-sponsored learning from written case studies; and the ability to predict the evaluation of a portfolio and documentation.

3.00 Application

[1] The ability to determine learning level of specific learning experience; the ability to justify the validity of prior, non-sponsored learning by means of the rationale for its recognition; and the ability to determine specific ways to document prior learning based upon an understanding of the nature and purposes of methods of documentation.

[2] The ability to construct a portfolio documenting prior learning based upon an understanding of its format, purposes, and evaluation criteria.

4.00 Analysis

[1] The ability to determine general competencies achieved in prior, non-sponsored learning based upon a knowledge of specifics, the parts and purposes of a competency statement, and the different levels of learning; the ability to determine the different methods of documentation possible in support of a challenge for college credit for a prior, non-sponsored learning experience; the ability to distinguish the levels and types of learning suggested by a course description in a college catalog, a competency statement, an autobiography or resumé, and a job description.

[2] The ability to recognize important and unimportant details relating to assessment in competency statements, autobiographies and resumés, job descriptions and skills inventory lists, and simulation and role-playing exercises; the ability to distinguish the causes in experience for learning and the results of experience that have resulted in learning; and the ability to distinguish learning of one type gained in several prior experiences.

[3] The ability to recognize the hierarchical structure of different levels and types of learning.

5.00 Synthesis

[1] The ability to write job descriptions, thematic and chronological autobiographies, resumés, competency statements, and skills lists; the ability to compile a portfolio

delineating, expressing, and documenting prior, non-sponsored learning; the ability to explain orally or in writing the general college-level learning derived from specific non-college experiences; the ability to explain orally or in writing the significance of prior learning to the development of skills.

[2] The ability to develop a strategy to learn experientially based upon a knowledge of self-directed and experiential learning; the ability to propose ways to document or test prior, non-sponsored learning, the ability to synthesize knowledge from one or more prior learning experiences.

[3] The ability to perceive various possible ways in which experiential learning consequences may be organized to form a conceptual structure and the ability to formulate generalizations from specific experiential learning.

6.00 Evaluation

[1] The ability to apply standards developed experientially to performance.

[2] The ability to determine the relative quality of job descriptions, autobiographies and resumés, skill inventory lists, documentation, and portfolios.

AFFECTIVE DOMAIN

1. Awareness of the characteristics and relative merits of self-directed and experiential learning.
2. Alertness to the learning potential in experiences.
3. Continued desire for life-long learning.

4. Assumes an active role in learning.

5. Attempts to identify the learning achieved in later experience.

6. Relates learning from two or more areas in later learning.

Next, it is possible to translate these types of learning into learning objectives stated in behavioral terms as recommended by Mager. Mager gives three characteristics of a useful objective: [1] it will indicate performance, or state what the learner is able to do; [2] it will indicate conditions under which the performance is expected to occur; and [3] it will indicate criteria, or state the quality or level of performance considered acceptable.[1] Accordingly, learning objectives proposed will include these three parts. In addition, they will reflect the following characteristics of adult learners noted by Knowles and Knox: [1] adults prefer self-diagnosis and self-evaluation;[2] [2] adults prefer active learning with an emphasis on practical application;[3] [3] adults prefer problems-centered learning;[4] [4] adults have some difficulty with short-term memory and quick recall;[5] [5] as a result, adults need self-paced instruction;[6] and [6] adults need new information presented

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[1]Robert F. Mager, Preparing Instructional Objectives(Belmont, California: Fearon Publishers, Inc., 1975), p. 23.

[2]Knowles, pp. 39-40.

[3]Ibid., pp. 44-45.

[4]Ibid., p. 48.

[5]Knox, p. 419.

[6]Ibid., p. 422.

with aids to assist the learner in organizing it for recall.[1] They will also seek to emphasize those critical areas in experiential learning identified by Coleman--assisting the learner in verbalizing and abstracting his learning so that a principle can be generalized.[2] And, finally, as with other courses to prepare adults for the assessment of prior, non-sponsored learning, these objectives will prepare the student for self-directed learning and subsequent experiential learning.

Knowledge

1. Given a list of four referrents for each of the following terms, the student will be able to match referrent and term correctly at a level of 70% accuracy with no time limit: competency, analyze, synthesize, reflect, non-sponsored, skill, knowledge, documentation, experiential learning, resume, portfolio, stimulation, role-playing, narrative, theory, history, concepts, principles, ideology, generalization, classification, system, methodology, processes.
2. Given a list of correct and incorrect statements concerning Black Hawk College's policies relating to the assessment of prior, non-sponsored learning, the student will be able to label those that are correct at a level of 70% accuracy with no time limit.

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[1] Knox, p. 437.

[2] Coleman, pp. 54-58.

3. Given a list of items including the steps in the process of assessment and detractors, the student will be able to select those that are correctly steps and arrange them in a chronological sequence at a level of 70% accuracy with no time limit.
4. Given a list of possible trends in the history of experiential learning, some correct and some incorrect, the student will be able to select the correct ones and place them in a chronological sequence at a level of 70% accuracy with no time limit.
5. Given a list of the characteristics of different levels of learning and a list of Meyer's three levels of abstraction, the student will be able to match level and characteristic correctly at a level of 70% accuracy with no time limit.
6. Given a written example of sponsored experiential learning, non-sponsored experiential learning, and sponsored classroom learning, each in the form of a short paragraph, the student will be able to write an essay of about 500 words comparing and contrasting each so that their major characteristics are delineated and illustrated from the examples provided, all with no time limit.
7. Given a correctly stated competency statement, the student will be able to label its parts and explain their purpose with 70% accuracy and no time limit, clearly and in enough detail so that another college student reading the explanation would feel that he understood how to write a competency statement.
8. Given a short narrative describing a worker's day, the student will be able to write a job description for that job that includes all basic parts, that is clear, that is stated in behavioral

terms, and that is complete and in sufficient detail so that another college student reading it would be able to understand the duties of the job, all with no time limit.

9. Given the job description that he has written and unlimited time, the student will be able to label each of its parts and explain their purpose in writing so that an average college student could write a description of a job that he holds.
10. Given paper and pencil and unlimited time, the student will be able to list the parts of a portfolio that are absolutely essential, the parts that may be included depending upon the learning to be assess, and the purpose of each part clearly and in sufficient detail so that another college student could evaluate a sample portfolio for completeness and effectiveness based upon the written answer.
11. Given paper and pencil and unlimited time, the student will be able to list the parts and purposes of a skills inventory clearly and in sufficient detail so that another college student could write a skills inventory for a job that he has based upon the written answer.
12. Given paper and pencil and unlimited time, the student will be able to list the two types of organization of an autobiography--thematic and chronological, briefly characterize each, and list the purposes of each clearly and in detail.
13. Given a list of all basic types of documentation currently commonly used in the assessment of prior, non-sponsored learning,

the student will be able to describe each, giving its distinguishing characteristics, and list the purposes of each at an accuracy level of 70% and with no time limit.

14. Given a list of the common methods of evaluation of prior, non-sponsored learning, the student will be able to list at least two criteria used in each with 70% accuracy and no time limit.
15. Given paper and pencil and no time limit, the student will list the major rationale for experiential learning and explain each in a short paragraph that is accurate and detailed.

Comprehension

1. Given paper and pencil and CAEL's diagram of a competency statement (Appendix C), the student will be able to translate an experiential learning example from his own non-academic background into a written competency statement that is precise and in correct form, with no time limit.
2. Given a model job description and unlimited time, the student will be able to translate a previous work experience of his own into a job description that contains all necessary parts, that is detailed and clear, and that is written in behavioral terms.
3. Given a college catalog course description, the student will be able to rewrite it in specific language that could be understood by the high school graduate who has never attended college, with no time limit.

4. Given a skills inventory and unlimited time, the student will be able to translate each item into less exact expression by the use of clear and detailed example.
5. Given a written case study of a typical adult returning to college that describes in some detail his life and experiences and a Black Hawk College catalog, the student will be able to list those college courses that seem to parallel the experiential learning suggested by the case study at a 70% accuracy level, with no time limit.
6. Given a written case study of a typical adult returning to college that describes in some detail the jobs that he has held, the student will be able to describe the learning that he has attained by written competency statements that are accurate, clear, and correct in form, all with no time limit.
7. Given a written case study and a written evaluation of its assessment, the student will be able to distinguish valid and invalid assessments at a 70% accuracy level, with no time limit.
8. Given a course description from a college catalog, the student will be able to list its major characteristics and learning objectives with 70% accuracy and no time limit.
9. Given a role-playing exercise and/or a stimulation exercise that illustrates college-level learning in experience, the student will be able to distinguish that learning and state it as a written competency with 70% accuracy and no time limit.

Application

1. Given a short case study illustrating non-sponsored, experiential learning, the student will be able to match learning and Meyer's level of abstraction with 70% accuracy and no time limit.
2. Given a short written argument against the crediting of prior, non-sponsored learning, the student will be able to argue in its support by means of the rationale for its recognition in a clear and convincing manner that demonstrates his understanding of that rationale, with no time limit.
3. Given a short autobiographical narrative of an adult seeking credit for prior, non-sponsored learning and unlimited time, the student will be able to list specific ways to document prior learning suggested by the autobiography that demonstrate his knowledge of the nature and purposes of the different methods of documentation, with no time limit.
4. Given unlimited time and any reference material that he wishes, the student will be able to construct a portfolio documenting his prior,non-sponsored learning that is correct in format and that is so prepared that he will receive at least three semester hours of college credit based upon its evaluation.

Analysis

1. Given a course description from a college catalog, the student will be able to list the levels and types of learning suggested by it with 70% accuracy and no time limit.

2. Given a competency statement and unlimited time, the student will be able to list the levels and types of learning suggested by it with 70% accuracy.
3. Given a written autobiography or resumé, the student will be able to list the levels and types of learning suggested by it with 70% accuracy and no time limit.
4. Given a written job description, the student will be able to list the levels and types of learning suggested by it with 70% accuracy.
5. Given paper and pencil, unlimited time, and any references that he wishes, the student will be able to describe in a short paragraph a learning experience that he has had in detail and clearly, to describe the causes for the learning that occurred in that experience in detail and clearly, and then to write a competency statement in good form for that experience so that he demonstrates clearly his understanding of the levels and types of learning.
6. Given paper and pencil, unlimited time, and any reference materials that he wishes, the student will be able to write a competency statement in good form that describes an ability that he has and then will be able to list and briefly describe at least three widely different prior learning experiences that contributed to that competency mastery.
7. Given paper and pencil and unlimited time, the student will be able to list Meyer's three levels of learning, to explain in writing how they form a hierarchy, and then to illustrate each and that hierarchy in a short paragraph using a prior experiential learning example of his own.

Synthesis

1. Given paper and pencil, unlimited time, and any reference material that he wishes, the student will be able to write a job description, a thematic autobiography, a chronological autobiography, a resume, a set of competency statements, and a skills list for a job, all demonstrating previous non-sponsored experiential learning of his own so that he demonstrates a knowledge of the significant characteristics of each and of the theory of experiential learning.
2. Given any reference material that he wishes and unlimited time, the student will be able to write a strategy for the experiential learning of a skill that he wishes to master that suggests his understanding of self-directed and experiential learning.

Evaluation

1. Given a problem and the necessary tools to solve it, the student will be able to demonstrate his knowledge of the development experientially of criterion standards by developing such a set of standards for the problem-solving that he performs.
2. Given a portfolio that he has prepared to demonstrate his prior, non-sponsored learning, the student will be able to predict with 70% accuracy the amount of college credit that he will receive from its assessment by a written request for credit that he attaches to the portfolio.

Affective Domain

1. Given a period of one year, the student will demonstrate his awareness of the characteristics and relative merits of self-directed and experiential learning and of the learning potential in experiences by registering for at least one college course that clearly describes itself as providing experiential learning activities.
2. Given a period of five years, the student will demonstrate his desire for life-long learning by undertaking at least one formal educational experience in each of four of those years.
3. Given a period of five years, the student will demonstrate his ability to relate learning from two or more areas by at least once consciously selecting a learning experience because it relates to a previous learning experience in another academic area or subject matter field.

These objectives need to be explained in two basic ways. First of all, whenever accuracy levels could be evaluated for the objective, 70% was selected as minimum somewhat arbitrarily but based upon previous experience with the use of such behavioral objectives. Secondly, in almost all cases these objectives require a written response. In many of these instances, a verbal response orally would also be adequate to demonstrate mastery, but written responses were required because of two fundamental reasons: the course will be offered on an individualized basis using instruc-

tional media and often off-campus and the process of documenting and demonstrating prior, non-sponsored learning by means of the compilation of a portfolio requires written skills.

Based upon the work of this practicum, the following general recommendations are made: (1) that a college credit course with these objectives be developed at Black Hawk College, (2) that this course be individualized and self-paced, (3) that this course be offered off-campus through the use of instructional media, (4) that a campus class be available using group experiences and activities, (5) and that the course be available on a variable-entry basis to provide students with flexibility.

If these recommendations are implemented, the process for the crediting of prior, non-sponsored learning at Black Hawk College will be considerably improved. Students will receive instruction to prepare them for the assessment; faculty will receive well-prepared portfolios; and adult students will come to understand how better to learn from experience, something that has been demonstrated to be an especially strong ability among such students.

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APPENDIX A: Colleges and Universities Surveyed

1. Bloomfield College, Bloomfield, New Jersey
2. Brooklyn College, Brooklyn, New York
3. California State College at Fresno, Fresno, California
4. College of New Rochelle, New Rochelle, New York
5. College of the Pacific, Stockton, California
6. DePaul University, Chicago, Illinois
7. Mt. Union College, Alliance, Ohio
8. Eastern Illinois University, Charleston, Illinois
9. Empire State College, Saratoga Springs, New York
10. Evergreen State College, Olympia, Washington
11. Fordham University, New York, New York
12. Framingham State College, Framingham, Massachusetts
13. Goddard College, Plainfield, Vermont
14. Governors State University, Park Forest South, Illinois
15. Immaculate Heart College, Los Angeles, California
16. Iona College, New Rochelle, New York
17. Kansas Wesleyan, Salina, Kansas
18. La Verne College, La Verne, California
19. Lewis University, Lockport, Illinois
20. Loretto Heights College, Denver, Colorado
21. Memphis State University, Memphis, Tennessee
22. Mount Mary College, Milwaukee, Wisconsin
23. New College of California, Sausalito, California
24. Northeastern Illinois University, Chicago, Illinois
25. Sacred Heart University, Bridgeport, Connecticut
26. St. Joseph's College, West Hartford, Connecticut
27. St. Louis University, St. Louis, Missouri
28. San Francisco State University, San Francisco, California
29. Union For Experimenting Colleges and Universities, Yellow Springs, Ohio
30. University of Evansville, Evansville, Indiana
31. University of Massachusetts at Boston, Boston, Massachusetts
32. University of San Francisco, San Francisco, California
33. University without Walls in Providence, Providence, Rhode Island
34. Washington International College, Washington, D.C.
35. Webster College, St. Louis, Missouri
36. Westminster College, Salt Lake City, Utah
37. Winona State University, Winona, Minnesota

APPENDIX B: Summary of Responses to Survey

Those Institutions Sending Information on a Course or Workshop

1. La Verne College, La Verne, California
2. Fordham University, New York, New York
3. Governors State University, Park Forest South, Illinois
4. Mt. Union College, Alliance, Ohio
5. Webster College, St. Louis, Missouri
6. Iona College, New Rochelle, New York
7. Metropolitan College of St Louis University, St. Louis, Missouri
8. San Francisco State University, San Francisco, California
9. University of Evansville, Evansville, Indiana

Those Reporting No Course but Sending Material on Assessment Process

1. Evergreen State College, Olympia, Washington
2. Goddard College, Plainfield, Vermont
3. Empire State College, Saratoga Springs, New York
4. Lewis College, Lockport, Illinois
5. Bloomfield College, Bloomfield, New Jersey
6. College of New Rochelle, New Rochelle, New York
7. Immaculate Heart College, Los Angeles, California
8. Sacred Heart University, Bridgeport, Connecticut
9. Framingham State College, Framingham, Massachusetts
10. Brooklyn College of City University of New York, New York, New York
11. Winona State University, Winona, Minnesota

Those Reporting No Programs

1. California State University at Fresno, Fresno, California
2. Westminster College, Salt Lake City, Utah
3. Eastern Illinois University, Charleston, Illinois

Those Not Responding

1. College of the Pacific, Stokton, California
2. DePaul University, Chicago, Illinois
3. Kansas Wesleyan, Salina, Kansas
4. Loretto Heights College, Denver, Colorado
5. Memphis State University, Memphis, Tennessee
6. Mount Mary College, Milwaukee, Wisconsin
7. New College of California, Sausalito, California
8. St. Joseph's College, West Hartford, Connecticut
9. Union for Experimenting Colleges and Universities, Yellow Springs, Ohio
10. University of Massachusetts at Boston, Boston, Massachusetts
11. University without Walls in Providence, Providence, Rhode Island
12. Washington International College, Washington, D.C.
13. Northeastern Illinois University, Chicago, Illinois
14. St. Louis University, St. Louis, Missouri

APPENDIX C

STEPS IN WRITING A COMPETENCE STATEMENT

1. Enter subject area.
2. Select one from column B to identify theoretical aspect.
3. Select one from column C to identify practical aspect.
4. If appropriate, select one from column G or use appropriate verb, complete description of how knowledge is applied.
5. Identify level of competence by selecting one from column A and/or completing D, E and/or F.

*Courtesy of Metropolitan State University

Source: Knapp, Assessing Prior Learning--A CAEL Handbook, p. 94.

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LOS ANGELES
JUL 29 1977
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